

Message Text

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ACTION AEC-11

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 NEA-14 IO-14 ISO-00 ACDA-19 CIAE-00

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 RSC-01 SCI-06 FEA-02

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 PA-04 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15

DRC-01 /158 W

----- 073831

R 071940Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1933

INFO USMISSION IAEA VIENNA

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 7608

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: TECH, PARM, IN, BR

SUBJECT: INDIAN NUCLEAR TEST: OFFER OF INDIAN TECHNOLOGY

REF: (A) STATE 116034 (B) BRASILIA 3679 (C) BRASILIA 3965

(D) NEW DELHI 7179 (E) BRASILIA 3964

1. REFTTEL A INQUIRED ABOUT THE ACCURACY OF THE QUOTATION
ASCRIBED TO THE INDIAN AMBASSADOR TO BRAZIL WHO REPORTEDLY
SAID, "MY COUNTRY IS PREPARED TO FURNISH TO ITS BRAZILIAN
FRIENDS THE TECHNOLOGY WHICH PERMITTED IT TO BUILD AN ATOM BOMB."

2. WE DON'T KNOW WHETHER THE INDIAN AMBASSADOR WAS QUOTED
CORRECTLY BY THE BRAZILIAN PRESS. BUT THE EMPHASIS ON THE TECHNOLOGY
TO BUILD AN ATOM BOMB IS SHARPLY AT VARIANCE WITH OFFICIAL INDIAN
STATEMENTS WHICH HAVE EMPHASIZED THAT INDIA CONDUCTED A PEACEFUL
NUCLEAR EXPERIMENT. IN THIS CONNECTION, SOME STATEMENTS HAVE
ALSO TOUCHED ON NUCLEAR COOPERATION WITH OTHER COUNTRIES.

3. FOR EXAMPLE, AT AN OAU CELEBTATION MAY 25, MRS. GANDHI
DERIDED "ALLEGATIONS AND APPREHENSIONS" ABOUT THE TEST AND THE
CONTENTION THAT "A POOR NATION CANNOT AFFORD THIS LUXURY."

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SHE ADDED, "WE HAVE SHARED A GREAT DEAL OF OUR DEVELOPING INDUSTRIAL

KNOW-HOW AND RESEARCH AND TRAINING FACILITIES WITH OUR NEIGHBORS IN ASIA AND AFRICA. THIS COVERS MANY FIELDS INCLUDING ENGINEERING, METALLURGY, NUCLEAR ENERGY, MEDICINE AND AGRICULTURE. WE SHALL ALWAYS BE WILLING TO USE OUR OWN KNOWLEDGE AND DEVELOPMENT TO HELP OUR NEIGHBORS AND OUR FRIENDS WHEREVER THEY MAY BE."

4. AN MEA OFFICIAL FAMILIAR WITH THE FIELD TOLD AN EMBASSY OFFICER THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT WAS LIKELY TO CONTINUE IN PUBLIC REMARKS TO EXPRESS A GENERAL WILLINGNESS TO SHARE NUCLEAR KNOWHOW WITH FRIENDLY COUNTRIES AND TO DECIDE ON AN AD HOC BASIS EXACTLY WHAT TECHNOLOGY TO SHARE. HE THOUGHT IT INCONCEIVABLE THAT AN INDIAN REPRESENTATIVE WOULD USE THE WORDS ASCRIBED TO INDIA'S AMBASSADOR IN BRAZIL; BUT HE SAW A DANGER THAT INJUDICIOUS

REMARKS BY INDIANS, PARTICULARLY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND IN NON-ALIGNED FORUMS, MIGHT CONVEY THE IMPRESSION INDIA WAS PREPARED TO SELL EXPLOSIVE DEVICE TECHNOLOGY.

5. AS WE COMMENTED EARLIER (SEE PARA 8 REFTEL D FOR FULL DISCUSSION),

THE INDIANS ARE CAPABLE OF HELPING THIRD COUNTRIES TO DEVELOP AND TEST NUCLEAR DEVICES, AND WE ARE UNABLE TO OFFER ANY CONVINCING ARGUMENTS THAT THEY WILL NOT DO SO IF OFFERED THE RIGHT INCENTIVES OR SUBJECTED TO THE WRONG PRESSURES. WE NOTE THAT INDIAN MINISTER OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS SURENDRA PAL SINGH EMPHASIZED INDIA'S WILLINGNESS TO SHARE ALL ITS TECHNOLOGY AND THE RESULTS OF ITS TEST WITH BRAZIL DURING HIS TRIP TO THAT COUNTRY (REF E). THE MORE DRAMATIC COMMENTS ATTRIBUTED TO SURENDRA PAL SINGH IN PARAS 1 AND 2 OF REF E HAVE NOT BEEN CARRIED IN THE INDIAN PRESS SO FAR. WE DO NOT KNOW WHETHER THIS IS BECAUSE SINGH WENT FURTHER THAN HE WAS REALLY AUTHORIZED TO GO IN PROMISING TOTAL NUCLEAR COOPERATION WITH BRAZIL OR BECAUSE OF INADEQUATE WIRE SERVICE FEEDBACK INTO INDIA OF HIS STATEMENTS. OUR GUESS--AND WE EMPHASIZE THAT IS ALL IT IS--IS THAT THE GOI HAS NOT YET REALLY COME TO GRIPS WITH EXACTLY HOW MUCH THEY WILL SHARE AND UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES WITH OTHER COUNTRIES.
MOYNIHAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NUCLEAR ENERGY, LESS DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, PEACEFUL USES OF ATOMIC ENERGY, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 JUN 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974NEWDE07608
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740146-1149
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740665/aaaacdtpl.tel
Line Count: 98
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AEC
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: (A) STATE 116034 (B) BRASILIA 3679 (, C) BRASILIA 3965
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 MAR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20 MAR 2002 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <08 MAY 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INDIAN NUCLEAR TEST: OFFER OF INDIAN TECHNOLOGY
TAGS: TECH, PARM, IN, BR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005